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Mount Rushmore National Memorial News Release

Mount Rushmore National Memorial Receives Generous Donation

(Keystone, SD) Mount Rushmore National Memorial has long been a special place to South Dakota native, Sharon Weinel, and her husband Jim. The Weinels' admiration and respect for the Memorial has inspired them to give an extremely generous donation of \$110,000 to the park.

"Mount Rushmore signifies the American Dream," said Jim and Sharon Weinel from Rosemount, MN. "There are four people up on that mountain that came from rather modest means, yet gave significantly, each in their own unique way. It is symbolic of this country and for the future of America. If we can be part of helping to preserve the Memorial for future generations to enjoy and experience, we would be honored to be part of that legacy."

"We are humbled by this extraordinary gift," said Mount Rushmore Superintendent Cheryl A. Schreier. "It is a perfect example of the tremendous impact that Mount Rushmore has on our visitors, and it is obvious by their generous contribution that the Weinels are among those who are greatly moved by the significance of this national memorial," added Schreier.

Sharon Weinel is originally from Howard, South Dakota, graduating from Howard High School in 1947. She attended South Dakota State College in Brookings, and later attended Metropolitan State University in Minneapolis, graduating in 1985. Jim is a Minnesota native, where he graduated from the University of Minnesota with a Civil Engineering degree in 1956.

Jim and Sharon met in Minneapolis and were married in 1956. Following a brief tour of duty in the Army, Jim and Sharon settled in Minnesota, where they have forged a successful partnership of 54 years. They have three children and 11 grandchildren.

Jim worked in the aerospace engineering field for five years, and in 1964 they had an opportunity to purchase a small company in Minneapolis, called Gemini. This vacuum forming company made various articles for industry in and around the Twin Cities and soon began making letters for the sign industry. The Weinels grew and expanded this venture into a major

industry making letters in plastic, aluminum, stainless steel, cast metal, and bronze. Gemini now has plants throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Philanthropy has always been of great importance to the Weinels personally and professionally, and their establishment of various engineering scholarships and endowments over the years has benefitted many.

The Weinels' generous donation, benefitting Mount Rushmore National Memorial, has been deposited in an account with the National Park Foundation. Chartered by Congress, the National Park Foundation is the official charity of America's national parks. The Foundation works closely with the National Park Service to connect all Americans to the parks, and to make sure that they are preserved for future generations. This philanthropic gift will enable Mount Rushmore National Memorial to continue its efforts to accommodate the millions of annual visitors who wish to experience the Memorial and share in the natural, cultural, and historical heritage of this special, powerful place.

"We've been very blessed in our lives, and we feel privileged to be able to help others. We believe this donation to Mount Rushmore and the National Park Service is an investment in one of our country's greatest resources, and will help provide millions of visitors an even greater educational and patriotic experience," said the Weinels.

For more information on the National Park Foundation visit: www.nationalparks.org

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